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June 26, 1985

85-77

SBC Presidential Contenders
Guarded But Not Threatened

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP)--Although both candidates for president of the Southern Baptist Convention were heavily guarded during the denomination's recent Dallas meeting, each has denied threats were made on his life.

W. Winfred Moore--defeated in his bid to unseat incumbent Charles F. Stanley--and Stanley spokesman Fred Powell told Baptist Press neither candidate received threats before leaving for the convention or during the meeting, held in the Texas city June 11-13.

Rumors swirled in Dallas that Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas, had been persuaded to contract with a private security firm for protection during the convention. But Moore, in interviews with Baptist Press June 11 in Dallas and June 20 from his office, emphatically denied he was threatened.

Another Dallas rumor held that Moore's house in Amarillo had been smoke-bombed, but the 65-year-old pastor denied that, too.

"Absolutely nothing that I ever saw or felt or sensed" either in Amarillo or Dallas led him to believe he was in danger, Moore declared. "I saw nothing...of a threatening nature."

But Moore did confirm what many observers in Dallas noted, that he was constantly accompanied by a young, armed guard from Dallas' Metro Protective Services.

In addition, Moore said, officials at the Dallas Hilton, where he and Stanley both stayed during the convention, were concerned about security to the point of "keeping very close check in the hallway" outside his room.

Powell, associate pastor of Atlanta's First Baptist Church, confirmed Stanley too was guarded during the convention. But like Moore, Powell strongly denied the 53-year-old Stanley had been threatened. "There were no threats" made on the Atlanta pastor and television preacher in either Atlanta or Dallas, Powell declared.

Powell did say, however, that at his suggestion, Stanley had agreed to take a member of the church's full-time security force to the convention and contract with a Dallas security firm to provide two other guards to accompany the SBC president during the convention.

The actions were taken "for crowd control," Powell said, adding Stanley often encountered difficulty getting from one place to another. "This was not something out of the ordinary," he said. Powell emphasized the security precautions were made at his--not Stanley's--insistence, and declared: "I'd rather be safe than sorry."

Moore and Powell gave contrasting views on the kind of mail the Amarillo and Atlanta pastors received before the convention.

Moore said he had received "some of the meanest mail I've ever seen."

Stanley's pre-convention mail, Powell reported, offered only encouragement, along with some suggestions on how to have a smooth meeting.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

Prayer Counters Eggs, Abuse
Thrown At French Congregation

By Art Toalston

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--Gene Phillips hasn't had to cope with maggot-filled eggs or rotten tomatoes for more than a year.

The Southern Baptist missionary often had the unpleasant task of going to the Bordeaux (France) Baptist Church early on Sunday mornings to clean up a mess.

The months of harassment had an anti-American tone. Once, "C.I.A." was painted on the large window of the storefront church. Other times, the slogans were "Yankee Go Home" and "Down with Yankee Imperialism." Three times the window was broken. With regularity, the building front was pelted with eggs or tomatoes or laced with shaving cream or whipped cream.

For several weeks in 1983, the phone rang at all hours of the night. Answering, Gene or his wife, Jackie, heard only silence. But for now, the attacks have ended. The missionaries point to three familiar words: God answers prayer.

"Since about a year ago, we've had no harassment at all," says Phillips, on furlough until August in Raleigh, N.C. "I give a lot of credit for it to the power of the Lord through prayer. There was a concentrated prayer effort on the part of a lot of people."

News of the harassment was reported in the Foreign Mission Board's periodical, The Commission, and in state Baptist papers. "We heard from people all over the world saying they were praying for us."

With freedom, the missionary couple and the 35-member congregation they lead have bought new property to accommodate 200 worshippers. Needed renovations have been tackled by volunteers from West Germany, Belgium and the United States.

The church is on target for becoming "an outreach center... a strong base" for Baptist work in southwestern France, Phillips says. "From there, we'll implement a strategy of locating other mission points in nearby areas."

Phillips, who works as a church planter under the Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches of France and its Home Mission Board, founded the pioneering church in 1975. It is the federation's only congregation in a metropolitan area of 650,000 people.

The harassment "didn't seem to bother" the young congregation, Phillips recounts. "They were always trying to tell us not to take it too hard, that it didn't represent the grass roots of the people." Some added, "It must be that we're doing something good, that we're making ourselves known."

And, Phillips said, people in the neighborhood "would come by, see the broken window, see us cleaning up or see the evidence of all the graffiti, and they would take our side. We gained their sympathy. It (the harassment) did just the opposite of discrediting us."

The volunteers also have had an impact in Bordeaux. Their gung-ho labors have impressed neighbors and passers-by. "People come by all the time and stop to ask what's going to be done with the building, and we have a chance to explain." The French also are interested that foreign Baptists, at their own expense, would invest their time and talents in the congregation, Phillips says.

Last summer, 35 volunteers, mostly U.S. military personnel, came from West Germany and Belgium. Earlier this year, 26 came from six U.S. states. Phillips expects about 25 more volunteers this fall through the Foreign Mission Board.

"There have been many who have said when the church gets finished, 'You can count on me to come.' Whether that's serious or just to be encouraging, I don't know," Phillips says. "But you can believe we're going to follow up on it."

Elder Encourages Educators
To Lead In Denominational Renewal By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist educators must take a strong leadership role if denominational renewal takes place, Lloyd Elder is convinced.

Elder, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, reminded educators during the annual meeting in Nashville of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools they have much at stake in current denominational controversies.

"Although the lightning rod has been mounted on the rooftop of the Southern Baptist Convention, the lightning bolt is often aimed at Baptist colleges of the state conventions," he warned. The Southern Baptist Convention, he said, is a vast network of aging organizations, including educational institutions, deeply wounded by controversy and in desperate need of renewal.

Elder said Southern Baptists have endured a historic Dallas convention of mammoth size and significance (June 11-13). "Now we face a critical year of reconciliation toward peace, with purpose and principle."

The head of Southern Baptists' publishing board presented ideas on how to develop blueprints for denominational renewal, insisting Southern Baptists must develop a plan for renewal based upon the "biblical principles of spiritual renewal and upon the management principles of organization renewal."

Organization renewal requires the asking of tough questions and a desire for truth and understanding, he noted.

Southern Baptists also must understand the nature of the denomination as a spiritual/human organization, Elder emphasized. He compared an organization to a human life with various stages of development--birth, youth and maturity.

Elder said the denomination is now in the maturity stage where the critical concern is to achieve uniqueness and adaptability.

While admitting the denomination has doctrinal and identity issues facing it, Elder believes the most pressing concern of Baptists today is "the crisis of change."

Transitions in the world around us necessitate change, he said. He reminded educators, however, there are things that are eternal and should not be changed at all because they are the givens of the Christian faith.

"Will we so reject the whole notion of change that we reject God's time with us and the stewardship that we have? We need to understand who we are as Southern Baptists. We are both human and we are a spiritual organization," he declared.

Elder urged educators to experience personal renewal and to initiate a renewal process for managing changes toward greater denominational maturity.

He concluded by telling the college presidents and deans that despite all the problems within the convention, he came away from Dallas with six notes of hope.

Positive signs from the SBC in Dallas, according to Elder, were a larger participation of lay people, a call to prayer, greater awareness of issues, the election of balanced leadership, the election of a special peace committee and the onslaught of Bold Mission Thrust "that some will not let go."

"If we are going to experience personal renewal and if we are going to initiate the renewal process we have got to build on the side of God's grace and not the dark side of human experience," he said.

If we ask God to give us his blueprint for denominational renewal, we can be the kind of people who would go back to our work and "get ready for the best days God has ever given to people--a people like those of us called Southern Baptists," he said.

Elder emphasized he is working on a dream he shares with countless others--that when this century ends Southern Baptists would have been faithful to the authentic gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that the last 15 years of this century would indeed be the very best time in the lives of Southern Baptists.

"If we have blueprints for renewal, God-given to us as a denomination, that can take place."

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Campers Rally,
Share Gospel

By Leisa A. Hammett

Baptist Press
6/26/85

KOSCIUSKO, Miss. (BP)--Approximately 200 motorhomes and campers from 14 states, recently ventured down the scenic Natchez Trace Parkway to rally for two common causes--Jesus Christ and camping.

The record number of 400 campers were participants in the 13th national Campers on Mission (COM) rally in Kosciusko, Miss., sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and hosted by the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

COM is a "loose-knit" organization of about 11,000 campers who share the good news of Jesus Christ in their travels. Members learn of volunteer opportunities and mission projects through regional and state chapters and the HMB special mission ministries department. In one such project, Mississippi campers helped build a Choctaw Indian church near Kusciusko.

Other modes of camping ministries, according to Sam Schlegal, HMB experimental ministries missionary, include leading informal worship services at campgrounds and passing out tracts at flea markets and crafts fairs.

Pete Petty, Arkansas Baptist state convention director of special mission ministries and interfaith witness, told the Kosciusko campers they were a major part of Bold Mission Thrust.

Vocational missionaries, said Petty, will not win the world to Jesus Christ by year 2000 without the volunteer help of Christians like Campers on Mission.

"Being a missionary has nothing to do with location, but your willingness to serve Jesus Christ," he said, promising when campers volunteered their time to Christian projects, they would discover abilities they did not know they possessed.

Petty said he discovered donning clown garb and performing magic tricks served as a successful attention getter at state parks and other camping areas.

More campers will show up to see a clown act or some sort of entertainment than to hear someone preach, said Petty. Clowning will attract attention and provide an opportunity to witness, Petty added.

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Long, Hard Hours On The Road
Get Grain To Hungry In Mali

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press
6/26/85

BAMAKO, Mali (BP)--Norman Coad keeps his emotions about drought in Mali at arms' length--close enough to keep him motivated but far enough to prevent paralysis.

He does that because he's determined to help the drought victims. And he's determined to do it the right way.

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That's also why the Southern Baptist missionary spends long hours going from government office to government office getting to know people, familiarizing them with his plans, seeking their input and approval.

That's why he spends even longer hours bumping down dusty roads under a blazing sun. That's why he'll spend every other week this summer away from home checking and rechecking to make sure everything's going according to plan.

Coad and his wife, Beverly, are newcomers to Mali--they arrived in September 1983 as Southern Baptists' first missionaries there. But in that time they've distributed 5,000 tons of grain, waged two vaccination campaigns and planned a community center for Bamako and a major development project for Kenieba. They're putting the finishing touches on plans to use Southern Baptist hunger relief funds to distribute another 6,000 tons of grain in the dry, starving land in coming months.

Why would a couple drive themselves to do so much in so short a time? Norman and Beverly Coad arrived in Mali with a vision. They felt God was calling them not just to start a personal ministry which might touch 100 people. They felt he called them to be part of his plan to strengthen the Christian church throughout Mali and to prepare the way for as many as 30 other Southern Baptist missionaries to come to the predominantly Moslem country.

"It's Mali's time," says Coad. "The Lord is ready to bring a lot of people into the kingdom in Mali." The signs are everywhere, they say, but especially in people's response to Christian help for drought victims. In many areas where Christians distributed grain last year, people are walking long distances just to find out more about Christianity.

This didn't happen by accident. It happened in part because the Coads contacted the Foreign Mission Board long before the crisis developed to start the wheels moving for grain distribution. It happened because Norman Coad worked with evangelical Christians across Mali, people he knew he could trust, to handle local distribution. It happened because those people knew their communities and knew who really needed help.

From the beginning, Southern Baptists were being closely observed. Malian officials watched to see whether these missionaries could avoid the pitfalls of corruption and distribute grain in areas others couldn't reach. They watched to see whether the Christian distribution system would follow their aims for preserving families and villages.

U.S. Agency for International Development looked for a model distribution program which could get their grain where it was needed with the least amount of loss.

Moslem and animist Malians watched to see whether the stories they'd heard about Christians were true. Would they help everyone or just Christians? What would they expect in return from those who accepted their grain?

By the time the Christian distribution ended, U.S.A.I.D. felt they'd found their model. The Coads reported less than 0.1 percent loss--an amount almost unheard of in relief circles. Mali's government was eager for Baptists to distribute grain again.

The Coads are working hard to duplicate last year's success with 6,000 tons of grain this year. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization recently named Mali as one of the six African nations most needing food this year. Inadequate grain stocks coupled with inadequate transportation make coming months a matter of life and death for many Malians.

The Coads plan to start distribution in July to fill the gap in the last months before harvest, when food is shortest.

They will use the same system as last year, working through evangelical churches and hiring Moslem observers to insure fairness. Coad will be assisted by Ricky Roberts, a journeyman from Maryville, Tenn., and David Saye, a Malian Christian teacher, who will coordinate distribution in Mali's fifth region, its traditional breadbasket.

Coad feels Southern Baptists have been preparing since the 1973-74 drought to respond to this one. In that time, he feels they've built one of the best drought response programs available.

He's played an important part in that. When the Coads first arrived in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) as music missionaries during the earlier drought, they were deeply moved by what they saw. Beverly says she spent much of their first term in tears. Every child she saw was her child; every older woman, her mother or grandmother. She couldn't have returned to the mission field, she says, if they hadn't found a way to help people there.

They began drilling wells and distributing grain, using a system similar to the one they're using in Mali. They dreamed of a major development project that would touch a whole region. Water development, agricultural, health and literacy training would mesh with evangelism to move a whole group of people away from the edge of survival.

Their dream became reality when Tennessee Baptists adopted their plans for the Sarwabo development project. Today that project is a model for Southern Baptist development work across west Africa.

When the Coads opened Southern Baptist work in Mali at the beginning of yet another drought, they were convinced they wouldn't penetrate the Moslem culture with traditional evangelism. "Mali is not a country you can go into with traditional evangelism," says Beverly. "They'll insult you and throw rocks at you, but they won't listen."

They would have to earn the trust of people who had been taught to distrust Christians. They would have to teach Malians about Christianity by living it. They set out to earn that trust by responding to needs for vaccination, developmental assistance and grain distribution.

In his years in Africa Norman Coad has learned how effective grain distribution can be as a witness when it is done right--and how it can damage the church's witness when it is done wrong. More than once, he has found himself mending fences after another relief group blundered in with good intentions, but too little knowledge and skill.

In one village, the commandant was reluctant for a Baptist photographer to make pictures. Another group had dumped a load of grain in town without proper controls and filmed the riot they caused. He wanted his people fed, but not at the price of destroying the social fabric.

On other occasions, aid groups have dumped such large amounts of free grain, that they destroyed delicate pricing systems designed to put the local farmer back in business.

Once last year, Coad had to call the Baptist distribution to a halt because transportation costs suddenly soared out of reach. Another relief group, eager to get grain to a particular location while celebrities and a film crew were there, had offered three times the going rate for transportation and priced others out of the market.

Coad feels it is important to build a stable relief program on hard work, not emotions. That's why he goes to the trouble to locate trustworthy Christian leaders who know the community to actually handle local distribution. That's why he spends many nights camped in African courtyards as he works to keep channels clear.

But the hard work does pay off.

Last year, a Christian pastor moved to Bankass to start a church, but people there wouldn't let him buy land or draw water. When he finally secured a poor field, he was still treated as an outcast. But then the Christian grain distribution came to Bankass.

The Moslem leaders told the people not to eat the Christian grain. They responded the leaders had no right to ask them to starve. Although the Moslem leaders claimed to know God, the people said, the Christians had shown by their actions that they were the godly ones. They ate the grain. Today, the people of Bankass support the pastor they once scorned.

High Court Strikes Down
Connecticut Sabbath Law

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)—A Connecticut law guaranteeing employees of private companies an absolute right to take a day off from work to observe their chosen Sabbath violates the Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 26.

In an 8-1 decision announced by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, the high court held the 1976 law ran counter to the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion because it had the primary effect of advancing religion.

Only Justice William H. Rehnquist dissented.

The surprisingly one-sided decision brought to an end a legal battle involving a Connecticut worker who died three years ago, but whose case was pursued by the administrator of his estate.

Donald E. Thornton, who worked for Caldor Inc., a chain of New England department stores, informed the company in 1979 he wished to take Sundays off to observe his Sabbath. Thornton was a Presbyterian.

According to lower court records, Thornton took the action after being advised by an attorney he had a legal right to demand Sundays off under provisions of a 1977 Connecticut law that read in part, "No person who states that a particular day of the week is observed as his Sabbath may be required by his employer to work on such day."

The law also stated that an employee's refusal to work on his Sabbath "shall not constitute grounds for his dismissal."

Although Caldor policy gave non-managerial employees the option of taking off for Sabbath observances, it required management level employees to work every third or fourth Sunday.

Thornton, a manager in the company's Torrington, Conn. store, worked a total of 31 Sundays in 1977 and 1978, and continued to work on Sundays through most of 1979 before deciding to invoke the law's provisions. Although Thornton was offered a transfer to a store in Massachusetts, where a Sunday closing law was still in effect, or a lower position in the Torrington store, he refused and was demoted.

Thornton filed a complaint against Caldor Inc. with the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration, a panel that sided with him. A state superior court then affirmed that holding.

But the Connecticut Supreme Court reversed, holding the statute did not have a "clear secular purpose." The primary effect of the law was to advance religion, the court stated, because it "confers its 'benefit' on an explicitly religious basis."

The Connecticut high court also said the requirement the state mediation and arbitration panel decide which religious observances qualified as legitimate Sabbath observances, "creates excessive governmental entanglements between church and state."

Burger agreed, pointing to a 1971 Supreme Court ruling that the establishment clause demands a law must have a secular purpose, must have the primary effect of neither advancing nor inhibiting religion, and must not excessively entangle church and state.

Because the Connecticut law "arms Sabbath observers with an absolute and unqualified right not to work on whatever day they designate as their Sabbath," Burger wrote, it runs afoul of the primary effect test. Burger also faulted the law in that it "commands that Sabbath religious concerns automatically control over all secular interests at the workplace," and "takes no account of the convenience or interests of the employer or those of other employees who do not observe a Sabbath."

Shared Ministry Urged
By John Sullivan

By Jim Lowry

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP)—Trust and fellowship are two vital ingredients in local churches which should compel paid staff members to share the ministry with church members, according to John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La.

Shared Ministry, an emphasis sponsored by the board's church administration department, encourages local churches to exercise a sharing and participation pattern of church life which includes church members in all aspects of ministry.

"If we believe in the priesthood of the believer, we must let people be involved in decisions," Sullivan said. "Because of the strategic location of our church here, we feel it would be hypocritical if we didn't do everything we could to minister to the needs of the community by touching lives in ministry, evangelism and benevolence.

"When a church moves toward shared ministry and builds the base of trust needed between staff and people, there comes together a cooperation and a greater integrity of ministry," he said. "When we start to live together and look like a church, the community starts to notice. This gives you the opportunity to say we—not I—have been with Jesus.

"Whatever else a church is and must become, it must become a reflection of Christ and become a fellowship," Sullivan explained. "If Jesus had not shared himself with those around him and allowed them to share in his ministry, they never could have become a fellowship. The same principle applies to the church. You cannot confront the world as an individualist, but instead together with a united front."

Sullivan said pastors need to realize trusting members to perform tasks in which they have expertise is not a threat, but an enhancement to ministry. He said he does not plan to spend his time every day working on electricity and finances when laymen in the church deal with those areas every day.

When Sullivan was pastor of a single staff church, he said he met with Sunday school leaders who became the educational staff. Broadmoor Baptist Church, with 5,197 members, has a Sunday school enrollment of more than 4,000 and 30 full- and part-time staff persons.

"The pastor's basic responsibility is for setting the spiritual climate and temperature of the church," he said. "The staff is the adhesive and motivator that keeps the ministry on track.

"If the man who works downtown will be the kind of minister he ought to be there, I won't have to spend all my time downtown," he said. "My people will touch hundreds of lives of people who I couldn't get in to see even if time permitted.

"It is hard to convince folks there is no church on this corner until we gather," he said. "When we gather or when we scatter, we are still the same church. Nothing has changed except the gathering and scattering."

Sullivan, who was first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention for two years, said he believes Bold Mission Thrust will never get off the ground unless it becomes a shared ministry. "The whole concept of Bold Mission Thrust involves cooperation, sharing and trusting.

"We talk about goals for the number of missionaries and churches and for Sunday school enrollment, but it will never have the impact we dream and pray it will unless the whole thing is built on sharing and ministry," Sullivan said.

"The most attractive thing to me about Southern Baptists when they won me to Christ at 18 was centered not only in the concept of Bible believing, but also the concept of cooperation," he said. "I was absolutely awed and overwhelmed by the fact that here was a major denomination without a dictatorial, ecclesiastical authority which functioned in such harmony.

"The more I think about Southern Baptists, the more I am convinced that when we fly the flag of cooperation and shared ministry, we are at our best," he said.

"That is why the Cooperative Program is so exciting," he added. "I share it in the life of every missionary, every educator and every seminary student every day. That is exciting."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

Library Called Storehouse
For Witness, Ministry

By Charles Willis

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ST. JOSEPH, Mo. (BP)—A library is not just a warehouse for materials but a storehouse of resources for witnessing and ministry, so far as Melba Burnham is concerned.

As media librarian for King Hill Baptist Church in St. Joseph, Mo., Burnham's operating philosophy has developed over a period of years out of the needs of library patrons.

A recent example is Teresa McKinley's need to be certain that her seven-year-old daughter, Ruthie, understood the profession of faith in Christ she said she wanted to make public.

"I wasn't sure she knew what she was doing," McKinley reflected. Seeking help from Burnham, McKinley took home a book written for children on the meaning of becoming a Christian. "When we got through the book, I was sure Ruthie was right in her understanding and feeling," she said. "Our pastor and children's workers visited her, and this last week Ruthie was baptized."

Church members seem to gravitate to the media library and to Burnham for answers to life's problems. McKinley observed, "We use our media, and everybody knows if we have anything on a particular subject, Melba knows where it is."

Burnham can cite instance after instance in which resources in the media library have helped members witness, meet challenges and deal with crises. A woman who had been abused, persons who have cancer, parents dealing with difficult children, adults and children dealing with the consequences of divorce have sought, and have been supplied, help through carefully selected resources.

Kenneth Chafin's The Reluctant Witness was a logical choice for the man who confessed to Burnham a lack of confidence in witnessing. After Weeping, A Song by Velma Darbo Brown, given to a woman whose husband was murdered, "helped, even though I cried through every page," the woman later told Burnham.

In the early days of her work, Burnham bought books produced by the Sunday School Board's church media library department to learn about the stages of development for a church media library. She attended training conferences at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center "every time I could, and I would go to Nashville for a National Media Library Seminar."

Throughout this time, Burnham recalled, the idea of ministry was stressed "in various way by various leaders. I recall Glynn Hill (a consultant in the church media library department) saying it would be better to use part of a larger room for the library and to leave it unlocked and perhaps lose some items because 'we serve people, not books.'"

"We're people who point people to resource," Burnham says of her colleagues in media library work across the Southern Baptist Convention. "It's a little bit frightening," she said of the responsibility to reach out to those in need. "It's a heavy thing to carry. Yet I feel privileged to think I've been able to help others."

"A library and its resources are to help the people of the church and the community," she said.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

Baptist Student Union
Strengthening Missions

By Frank Wm. White

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. (BP)—The lighted sign outside the building may say "Baptist Student Union" but the building serves as a rescue mission that touches the lives of students, according to Ken Vaughn, director of the BSU at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah.

"The BSU is a place where students can go and feel at home. It's their place to belong," Vaughn explained.

While the BSU at Northeastern touches the lives of students, it gets those students involved in growing churches both in east central Oklahoma near the university and in Utah.

BSU involvement helps mission activities now and will strengthen missions in the future as the students become involved in full-time missions careers or in mission activities in their churches, Vaughn pointed out.

Northeastern BSU students work with local churches and churches in Utah through an associational partnership with three Baptist associations there.

The uniqueness of the university in the eastern Oklahoma town that is the capital of the Western Cherokee Indian nation creates a need for different BSU programs and offers varied ministry possibilities. Among the university's 7,000 students are more than 1,000 native Americans which is said to be the largest campus population of American Indians. The campus also has about 1,000 black students.

Five years ago, Vaughn noted the native Americans, blacks and other groups were not being reached by campus organizations. He set out to change that.

Now the BSU sponsors a black student fellowship and a native American student organization. It also provides a meeting place and other assistance for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and is developing an international student involvement.

The BSU is not one organization but a collection of smaller organizations that meet the needs of particular groups of students, Vaughn explained.

While all of the groups may not be together at any one time, mission involvement is a central focus of BSU activities.

Whether it is the music team, drama group or puppet team or a group of students going to paint, repair or build a church, the BSU involvement leads to a commitment to missions for the students, Vaughn explained.

The constant and frequent involvement of the BSU in local churches has helped develop a close relationship between the BSU and area churches, according to Bill Fuller, director of missions for the East Central Baptist Association in Tahlequah.

A commitment to missions is paying off for Northeastern and other Oklahoma Baptist student programs, according to Bob Lee, state director of student work.

More than 60 Oklahoma students will be involved in summer missions this year and at least six former Oklahoma students are working as Mission Service Corps volunteers, Lee said.

"It's exciting to see students give one or two years of their lives to missions to start new work," Lee said.

The number of students involved in missions is continuing to increase, he pointed out.

"We try to educate students to the importance of missions. Missions is at the center of everything we do in student work," said Lee.

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While all of the groups may not be together at any one time, mission involvement is a central focus of BSU activities.

Whether it is the music team, drama group or puppet team or a group of students going to paint, repair or build a church, the BSU involvement leads to a commitment to missions for the students, Vaughn explained.

The constant and frequent involvement of the BSU in local churches has helped develop a close relationship between the BSU and area churches, according to Bill Fuller, director of missions for the East Central Baptist Association in Tahlequah.

A commitment to missions is paying off for Northeastern and other Oklahoma Baptist student programs, according to Bob Lee, state director of student work.

More than 60 Oklahoma students will be involved in summer missions this year and at least six former Oklahoma students are working as Mission Service Camp volunteers, Lee said.

